MARXISM AND COMEDY

by Max Apple

I

The "history of ideas" is one of the great obscenities in the Marxist vocabulary. For Marx, history is clearly the relationship of man and his available means of production. Ideas lead only to other ideas. History moves forward; the development of mankind, says the Marxist critic Lukács, "does not and cannot finally lead to nothing and nowhere."[1] This concept of the "end" of history is the wonder, the intellectual and emotional lure of Marxism. History has a purpose which has been subverted and disguised in the rhetoric of "Jesus saves," a rhetoric that promises the next world while this one is usurped by capital. Marxism promises this world, the only one; it translates "Christ died for you" into "history lives for you." Karl Marx is the Messiah of the industrial age. His doctrine in less than a century has already risen to challenge the Christian West and its Crusades have scarcely begun.

Yet, Marx's dream of a proletariat that would be free to read Aeschylus and enjoy the fruit of its labor was, from its political inception, debauched by the power struggle from which Lenin emerged. The messianic hope of Marxism has been somnolent through fifty years of Soviet Communism, but even more disturbing to the nineteenth century Marxist "world picture" are the indications that the industrial process may be moving toward an early obsolescence. In the nineteenth century a socialist could only look toward that rosy era when the workers would own the means of production; in the post-cybernetic age we will be faced with the far more complex problems of how former workers are best able to use their emancipation from industrialism. The penetrating irony of what the computer age may do to Marxist ideology lies in the hope that free men will want far more than the ownership of ugly machinery. The "inevitable" destiny of the future rests on a satisfying life style rather than a full work week.

The history of literature initially seems aloof from this inexorable grind of the worker toward his destiny, and it is this very aloofness which a Marxist would at once characterize as decadent and irrelevant. For the Marxist synthesis of history does not exclude literature. Like all other aspects of human history, literary history is either materialist or idealist. The materialist his-

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Mr. Apple is Assistant Professor of English at Rice University.

torian recognizes that the author is a worker subject to all the economic forces of his time. Shakespeare is a man in a particular socio-economic environment who happens to write poems or plays just as other men keep shops or breed animals.

"In a communist organization of society," say Marx and Engels, "there are no painters; at most there are people who, among other things, also paint."[2]

The problems of Marxism and literary history are at once apparent. If an artist is merely one class of worker, why should history concern itself with one kind of work more than with another? It would be as reasonable to write a history of the kind of gloves produced by the elder Shakespeare as of the kind of plays produced by his offspring. Of course no Marxist would allow himself to be reduced to such a posture; he would merely point out that to discuss the relationship of William Shakespeare and the economic conditions of Elizabethan England is the only framework of Shakespearean literary history. Marxism is not Philistinism; poems are more important than gloves, but only because the truth of literature, as Engels observed in his comments on Balzac, consists in the writer "seeing," in spite of his own cultural and ideological sympathy, "the true men of the future." Lenin's praise of Tolstoy is offered on the same basis. Tolstoy sees with "greater truthfulness his own side and his own ideas, both unprogressive."[3]

The system of attributing values to literature is ultimately based upon the proper understanding of socio-economic phenomena, and upon such seemingly non-literary concepts as historical determination and the division of labor. It is an esthetic theory which leaves little room for theorizing since a system that declares human labor to be the only value succeeds in reducing the good and the beautiful to categories of the useful.

As early as 1894, the dedicated but "revisionist" Marxist Jean Juarès pointed to the central failure of Marxist theory to explain "what I call disinterested sensations."[4] Juarès goes on to state a position which continues to be the great flaw in Marxist esthetic theory:

> I agree with Marx that all development ultimately is a reflection of economic phenomena in the brain, but on the condition that we say there is already in the brain, by virtue of its aesthetic sense, imaginative sympathy, and need for unitary understanding, fundamental forces which influence economic life. . . . I am not juxtaposing intellectual faculties with economic forces . . . but I say it is impossible that observed economic phenomena can affect the human brain without setting into operation the original powers I have just analyzed. And that is why I cannot agree with Marx that religious political and moral conceptions are nothing but a reflection of economic phenomena. Man represents such a fusion of what is human in him and his economic environment that it is impossible to dissociate economic life from moral life. . . . One can no more cut man in two and dissociate his organic life from his consciousness than one can cut historical humanity in two and dissociate its life of ideas and ideals from its economic life. That is my thesis whose partial confirmation I find in Greek philosophy.[5]

Literary history as a branch of idealist history concentrates almost ex-

clusively on the "disinterested sensations" that are independent of circumstance. We talk about the mind of Homer or the art of Shakespeare as if we mean something more than a bronze age minstrel or an Elizabethan showman. We believe in the "primacy of spirit"; men die but ideas live. Literary creations are the eternal ideas of men as they are expressed in language. To be sure, ideas are interconnected, men are influenced by each other and by the past, but in idealist terms, to come to some understanding of Homer or Shakespeare ultimately implies an ability to enter into the workings of a particular mind. Whatever we know about the relationship of the writer to his social and economic environment is important but not the "efficient cause" in determining esthetic value.

The difference between idealist and materialist literary history is the difference between the spirit of God in the shape of man, and the spirit of the age in the shape of a job. The idealist cannot simplify esthetic theory to a matter of utility or literary history to a subgenre of economics. The artist is separate from other workers. The Marxist reads in this separatism another instance of the "separation of man from himself" which characterizes the bourgeois epoch. "Those who are above the struggle," say the Marxists, "are beside the point."

The esthetic limitation of systematic Marxism is even more revealing when Materialist History is conjoined with comic theory. Aside from his pleasure in reading the novels of Paul De Koch,[6] there is little to indicate that Marx had a particular fondness for comedy. In one essay he states,

> Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur as it were twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.[7]

Marx surely did not intend this as a statement of comic theory, but it is significant that at least momentarily he recognizes a comic stance in the gloomy process of history. Leon Trotsky, the other intellectual Titan of materialist history, makes a specific statement uniting communism and comedy,

> Our theatre is terribly in need of a new realistic revolutionary repertory, and above all of a "Soviet Comedy." . . . We need simply a Soviet comedy of manners, one of laughter and of indignation. . . . if your comedy will try to say: "see what we have been brought to; let us go back to the nice old nobleman's nest"—then of course the censorship will sit on your comedy and will do so with propriety. But if your comedy will say: "we are building a new life now, and yet how much piggishness, vulgarity, and knavery of the old and new are about us; let us make a clean sweep of them"—then of course the censorship will not interfere.[8]

Trotsky is expressing his personal appreciation of comic values; it is the appreciation of a civilized humanist for a gratifying social experience, for what Northrop Frye calls "the integration of society" which is the essential theme of comedy. Yet, it is one thing for Professor Frye to speak as wonder-

fully and dispassionately as he does of comedy; it is something very different for Leon Trotsky, living between the Revolution and the Axe, to speak of a "Soviet Comedy." Professor Frye's "comedy" is the integration of an existing society; Trotsky is talking about a society that has not yet come into being. Even more fundamentally antithetical to comedy, Trotsky is talking about a perfect society, one which will not need a comic corrective.

Aristotle left us no systematic comic theory, but we do have his clear observation that comedy describes "inferior persons" and deals with "defects" and "ugliness," so long as they are not "painful or destructive." In spite of Trotsky's plea, up to the present there is no Soviet Comedy to indicate defects and ugliness in Soviet life. Trotsky is completely Aristotelian when he calls for a comedy that will not be destructive, but will yet point out the "piggishness, vulgarity, and knavery" of even the New Society. But how can comedy point out piggishness when the State declares that there is none, and makes this declaration the basis of its literature? Trotsky's dream, perhaps as pure as Marx's own, does not stand up in Lenin's world.

Comedy thrives on "inferior people." In the United States there exists a comic world open to any man who has the capacity to see in each of his petty achievements something less than perfection. In our best moments comedy reminds us that we are only men; in our worst times it reminds us that being men need not be as painful as we make it. In most societies, comedy, as all art, deals with means, religion with ends. Marxism, since it removes religion, must infuse the religious end, the idea of perfection, not merely achievement, into literature. No human act is petty; there can be no comic gadfly in a perfect social order. Historically comedy thrives on Aristotelian "ugliness." In the degeneration of Athens from a Republic to an Empire, Aristophanes found his ideal comic target. In seventeenth century England, a comedy of manners flourished in direct proportion to the decadence of Restoration society. In France, Molière's Bourgeois Gentleman went uncorrected until less than a hundred years later the Revolution made the ultimate correction. English comedy flourished anew in the later Victorian era as Wilde, Shaw, and W. S. Gilbert led Britannia, laughingly, out of her lavish Empire. But these were all comic corrections of imperfect civilizations, corrections based on the premise that through the sanity of men and the grace of God, things can improve. Marxism substitutes Perfection for Deity and improvement; its aim may be noble, but the Perfect at once begins to exclude the Comic.

As surely as tragedy depends on a transcendent ethical notion, comedy depends on a definite social norm. It is possible to imagine a transcendent ethical principle in Marxism; it is virtually impossible to imagine a social norm in a society that exists at the expense of the "normal." Comedy seeks to preserve what is; it is fundamentally conservative. Its grand intention, say the Cambridge anthropological critics,[9] is *gamos* (union) demonstrated with

biological realism in ancient comic ritual, and symbolized by marriage in modern comedy.

Death, in its most arrogant social form, war, is virtually by definition the principal antagonist to comedy. From Imperial Athens to Imperial America the warrior politician is the most serious threat to human existence and consequently is the obvious comic target. The comic spirit understands that although politicians and theologians speak of "democracy" and "evil," the average man is more concerned with enjoying his meal than with saving his soul. As Albert Cook states, "Social thought and its art form, comedy, considers not the extreme value of good and evil, but the pure action 'mean' of best policy."[10] The Aristotelian mean, the life style of the man of practical virtue, is both the comic ideal and the ideal comic target. Marx relabels this practical man, "Proletariat," and creates of him a Promethean hero who will father a new world which, though it may be good, will never be average.

Thus, it would seem that Trotsky's hope for a Soviet Comedy represents a dangerous Aristotelian mean in the ethereal extremity of Marxism. But this is a meaningful argument only if one accepts the bourgeois concept of normal. A Marxist would surely be quick to point out that historical materialism and comedy both rely on the same central concept, the idea of what is "social." When Professor Frye discusses ironic comedy, he concentrates on the absolute necessity to rid the society of the Pharmakos (scoundrel). He also discusses the dialectical nature of literary possibility. The upper limit of imaginative literature, Frye states, is

> a point at which an imaginative vision of an eternal world becomes an experience of it (the end of the *Paradiso*). In ironic comedy we begin to see that art also has a lower limit. . . . This is the condition of savagery, the world in which comedy consists of inflicting pain on a helpless victim, and tragedy in enduring it.[11]

The Marxist view of history could use Frye's very terms to justify its own version of the past. The Pharmakos becomes first the feudal lord, then the bourgeois, while the dialectic of literary possibility equates the experience of the eternal world with the achievement of a communistic society, and the "condition of savagery" with the pre-revolutionary societies in which the besieged lower classes have faced only the chance to be tragic in their endurance. Such a reorientation of Frye's concepts would be based on the assumption that a condition of social normality is not to be found in the past, but created in the future. The only normal world for workers is the world which they will build when they are finally liberated.

Along with "social" and "normal," our usual comic conceptions deal with what is "typical," and here too, the dogma of socialist realism provides its own specific definition. A great part of the comic effect depends upon the contrast between what is typical of a character and typical of his society. Mrs. Gamp is one of Dickens's most engaging comic creations. There were undoubtedly many women similar to Mrs. Gamp among the London poor,

yet no reader would ever mistake Sairy Gamp for anyone else. Her language and her thoughts are similar to everyone's but unmistakably and "typically" her own.

The "typical," said Georgi Malenkov at the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party in October 1952,

> corresponds to the essence of a given social-historical phenomenon. . . . Deliberate exaggeration in order to sharpen a characterization does not mean that the character is not typical, but on the contrary, brings out and emphasizes the typical more fully. . . . The question of the typical is always a political question.[12]

No literate man could ever conceive of Mrs. Gamp as "the essence of a given social-historical phenomenon." A political Mrs. Gamp might as well be a melodramatic Stephen Blackpool. Non-Marxist readers distinguish between Dickens's comedy and his melodrama but there is no basis in socialist realism for making such "petty" divisions. Pre-Soviet notions of comedy are so alien to social realism that the "positive hero" in a Soviet "Industrial" or "Agricultural" comedy could be presented in the United States only in the "decadent" theater of the absurd.[13]

From the point of view of "bourgeois humanism," Karl Marx is one of modern history's chief comic targets; before we can feel smug about this, we must recall that from the same point of view Socrates was one of fifth-century Athens' chief comic targets. In this comparison one sees the great danger of placing too much trust in the comic spirit. If there is a theology of comedy, it might be something like a finite form of right reason; the comic attack is instinctively right, but only temporarily, because the society it protects is itself subject to the judgment of history. Comedy recognizes no principle higher than self-preservation; of all spirits it is the one that cannot fly. Its strength is in illuminating the particular, the time-bound; its weakness is its inability to encompass man's highest aspirations, those visions that transcend time and are for the Marxist the messianic grind of historical inevitability.

There is, then, at least the possibility that comic theory and Marxist theory are almost mutually exclusive unless one adopts the communist world-to-come as normal and reconsiders everything from this new enlightenment. This is what one finds when he turns to an examination of socialist realism, the esthetic doctrine of Soviet society. It is indeed a futuristic and practical moral theory far more than it is an esthetic doctrine.

If there is a pervasive theory of comedy in the Marxist analysis of history, it would in the twentieth century have to be a theory consistent with the aims of socialist realism. The clearest statement of these aims is contained in a statute of the Union of Soviet Writers:

> Socialist Realism . . . demands of the artist the truthful historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical

> concreteness of the artistic representation of reality must be linked with the task of ideological transformation and education of the workers in the spirit of socialism.[14]

This is a statement that judges all art by its relationship to the ultimate victory of the Revolution. There is no room for mere estheticism in such a doctrine. Bourgeois society talks of a realism that shows men as they are; socialist realism shows men as they should be. If it could be separated from contemporary politics, this is a doctrine that might have well suited the ancients or the nobles of the English Renaissance. Sir Philip Sidney's man-as-he-should-be has long been lost to English literature, which at least since Wordsworth has prided itself on men as they are. "Reality" in its "revolutionary development" is, as Tertz observes, "the inevitable movement toward Communism . . . in the light of which we see reality."[15] Socialist realism is, in fact, socialist classicism; the concept of what is human is molded by a perfect vision of world order. Man is saved not by Grace that is the gift of bounty, but by recognition of the order of human history, an order which leads to the timeless classical communist man. As Gorki says, "Only men who are pitiless, straight and hard as swords will cut their way through." Socialist realism is pure and merciless and it demands a total loyalty.

II

As recently as 1966 socialist realism was tested in the Soviet courts. Officially, the trial of Yuri Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky was a political and legal matter involving "agitation or propaganda conducted with a view to subverting or weakening the Soviet regime"; from the viewpoint of literary theory the trial examined the possibility of peaceful co-existence between socialist realism and the comic spirit. Especially in the case of Tertz-Sinyavsky, the trial measured whether or not a half century of work toward the "Purpose" had been long enough to allow the emergence of a comic hope into materialist history.

The inability of early Soviet comedy realistically to portray Soviet life was recognized by Marxist critics of the 1930s, but was considered a fault of the times rather than an inherent weakness of the Marxist esthetic. Even Gorki's high comedy, *Yegor Bulychov,* written in the 1930s, came no closer to contemporary Soviet life than the revolutionary months of 1917. Gorki was excused because "the environment of daily living changes every day. . . . This fluidity of the material, its multiplicity of forms, makes the problem of the playwright extremely complicated."[16]

Trotsky, also recognizing the weakness of Soviet comedy, thought that the mere passage of time would be enough to build the new culture. It took thousands of years to create art in slave owning societies, hundreds of years in bourgeois society. In *Literature and Revolution* he speaks of the "twenty,

thirty, or fifty years of proletarian world revolution" necessary before the new society could change its dynamics from politics to culture. The conviction of Sinyavsky at virtually the fifty year mark in Soviet history suggests that fifty years has not been time enough to move from Stalin's notion that "writers are engineers of human souls" to the more expansive dynamics of culture that Trotsky envisaged.

Among the publications for which Sinyavsky was convicted is a short work titled *On Socialist Realism,* in which Sinyavsky, with heavy irony, raises again the old objection of Juarès that the system takes in everything except what is "human." His literary method is another resort to Aristotelian "practical virtue"—what good is all this theorizing about "Purpose" while the society suffers under a dictatorship? Sinyavsky resents the identification of Communism with basic metabolism. G. Lukàcs has very eloquently stated that the object of Proletarian humanism "is to reconstruct the complete human personality and free it from the distortion and dismemberment to which it has been subjected in class society,"[17] but Sinyavsky ironically demonstrates the "distortion and dismemberment" of Soviet society.

> So that prisons should vanish forever, we built new prisons. So that all frontiers should fall, we surrounded ourselves with a Chinese Wall. So that work should become a rest and a pleasure, we introduced forced labor. . . . We wrote lies in Pravda [truth]. . . . We introduced tortures . . . sometimes we felt that only one final sacrifice was needed for the triumph of Communism—the renunciation of Communism.[18]

Sinyavsky's attack would not endanger a society that could endure a comic corrective, nor would it artistically jeopardize a comprehensive esthetic theory. The conviction of Sinyavsky and Daniel is nothing less than a public confession that the Soviet society is not yet civilized enough for comedy. The transcript of the trial is amazingly similar to Sinyavsky's own fictional work *The Trial Begins* (1956), a similarity that the prosecution viewed as further evidence of slander. Throughout the courtroom proceedings the real question was not the guilt of two men, but "what is art?" as the haggard Sinyavsky with academic patience tried to persuade the prosecution that "the most rudimentary thing about literature . . . is that words are not deeds and that words and literary images are conventions."[19]

Throughout the trial both men went to great effort, far more than their defense required, to affirm that they were Communists. "I touch upon Marxism," says Sinyavsky, "not in the economic or social sense, but in the moral context. . . . I regard Communism as the only goal that can be put forward by the modern mind. . . . The Western ideas about renunciation of force have no appeal to me. My reply to liberal critics is: and what have all your doddering old humanists achieved?"[20]

But these affirmations are not enough; it is not only the "Communist Goal" to which all men must adhere, but the systematic achievement of it through an unquestioning Marxism. Sinyavsky and Daniel may have done

nothing more damaging than suggesting that Lenin was given to "baying" at the full moon, but their conviction is the awesome price of comic relativism in an absolute system. The Soviet notion of literature is very clear. All literature is propaganda: it is either pro-Soviet or anti-Soviet. Sinyavsky's plea for "literary standards" is surely irrelevant in a society that does not distinguish between art and life. In the United States, literature is an aside, something like sports, important enough to have its own section in a weekly newspaper. We may indeed be the last Capitalist nation, but not because we are too decadent to imprison men for their esthetic doctrines. They may have underestimated us, these evangelical Marxists who see only our lack of "Purpose," without recognizing the agility of aimlessness. Marxists risk everything at every moment; we trust that that very history in which they read our doom will allow us "enough grace to capture a thief more graceful than ourselves." The intellectual symmetry of Marxism is too heavy for the air we breathe, as Norman Mailer suggests:

> Leninism was built to analyze a world in which all the structures were made of steel—now the sinews of society are founded on transistors so small Dragon Lady could hide them beneath her nail.[21]

Sinyavsky spent several years in Siberia and is now an exile because he had the comic insight to write sentences like these:

> At once everything fell into place. An iron necessity and a strict hierarchical order harnessed the flow of the centuries. The Ape stood on its hind legs and began its triumphant procession toward Communism.[22]

In these three sentences Sinyavsky has shaken Communism from the libraries of Leningrad to the feeble rhetoric of Gus Hall. In a few phrases, Marxism and its bastard progeny, the Soviet society, have been reduced to a comic perspective. "The Ape" and "Communism," the beginning and the end of human experience, have met in the syntax of one sentence and rendered each other impotent. Sinyavsky has exorcised the extremes of a brutish past and a brutal future; Aristotle's "mean," the "present," the man who "gets along" is the victor of the syntactical battle. Behind the ape lies Plekhanov's elaborate proof that Marxism does not contradict Darwinism but coincides with it by examining the historical life of the zoological species in terms of the change in productive forces. But in the glare of the comic moment Darwin and Marx are equally ludicrous. Theories falter, only men triumph when they recognize the ape in the positive hero.

The conviction of Sinyavsky is obvious proof that Soviet society sees everything but itself in historical perspective. It is criminal to define realism as "what is." "To our new God," Sinyavsky says, "we sacrificed not only our lives, our blood and our bodies. We also sacrificed our snow-white soul after staining it with all the filth of the world."[23] His voice is the echo of the comic spirit. There is much to be saved, but also much to be banished. With

the devastating rightness of comedy, Sinyavsky strikes the jugular vein of Marxism. In order to achieve his exquisite notions of the value of human labor, the dignity of the working class, and the collective community, Marx had to sidestep individual man. Idealist history chronicled men; materialist history discovered that the true secret of human affairs lay shrouded in "conditions." The great fabric of Marxism depends ultimately on the frail if not utopian assumption that the best conditions will produce the best men. The power of man's nature, says Engels, "must be measured not by the power of a single individual but by the power of society." Collective mankind to the Marxist is no longer that flimsy creation hardly able to distinguish cloud-cuckooland from Eden, but a mass of Prometheans illuminating the cosmos. Marxism recognizes the hopeless folly of the individual quest, especially as it has been expressed in all religions, but the quest of collective mankind for social perfection, rather than personal salvation, is for the Marxist not only justified but verified by the life process itself.

The Marxist reorientation from individual affairs to collective grace necessitates the reorientation of comic priorities. In bourgeois society the comic target is the eccentric man, the classless society presents itself as the comic target. Man as "end" is "ludicrous . . . merely a subdivision of the ugly." Sinyavsky's comic target is the social structure of the Soviet Union, perhaps the world's first full-scale comic-society, replete with all the purposefulness, vanity, and self-righteousness that have characteristically marked individual comic targets.

There will be Soviet comedy when, as Croce suggests, Marxists realize "that classes and masses are abstractions incapable of thought or action, and even less capable of thinking or acting rightly, which can only be done by a concrete human individual."[24] It will not be propaganda when Soviet comedy presents peasants with dirt in their fingernails and dung on their shoes sipping tea from chipped glasses while they discuss the "dialectical process" as if it were an exercise in sheep breeding. It will be that freedom to laugh at piggishness and knavery which is as central to human dignity as the value of labor. The comic spirit awaits its moment in the Soviet society; when it does come, it may well unite "decadent capitalism" and "purposeful communism" into that cunning union of the slightly ridiculous and the vaguely transcendent, that peculiarly human state in which men as they are may really seem as good as they ought to be.

NOTES

1. George Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York, 1964), p. 4.

2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Literature and Art* (New York, 1947), p. 76.

3. V. I. Lenin, quoted by Galvano Della Volpe, "Theoretical Issues of a Marxist Poetics," in *Marxism and Art* (New York, 1972), p. 196.

4. Jean Juarès, "L'idealisme de l'historie," in Sidney Hook, *Marx and the Marxists* (New York, 1955), p. 367.

5. Ibid., pp. 368-370.

6. Paul DeKoch is known to English literature primarily by Joyce's reference to him in *Ulysses* as the author of *The Sweets of Sin.* The complete works of DeKoch list no such title. DeKoch, even to his admirers, is a minor figure. The fact that Marx read him is evidence of Marx's taste as well as of the range of his reading.

7. Karl Marx, "On Tradition, Personality, and Class Forces," in *Marx and the Marxists,* p. 153.

8. Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1957), pp. 238-239.

9. Jane Harrison and Gilbert Murray read ancient comedy almost exclusively as a fertility ritual; contemporary scholarship has been moving away from ritualistic interpretation and toward the "sociological" (Victor Ehrenberg) and "philosophical" (Cook, Frye, Feibleman) concerns of comedy.

10. Albert Cook, *The Dark Voyage and The Golden Mean* (New York, 1962), p. 34.

11. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York, 1966), p. 45.

12. Georgi Malenkov, in Peter Yershov, *Comedy in the Soviet Theatre* (New York, 1957), p. 220.

13. There have of course been innumerable comedies in Russia since 1917, but as Peter Yershov points out, "laughter for laughter's sake . . . gradually lost the right to exist and only moralizing laughter intended to reform society was considered seemly." Apparently Soviet critics have been able to discuss comedy by redefining the genre. L. Timofeyev states in *The Large Soviet Encyclopedia* that "genres of one (social) class do not have anything in common with genres of another class, even when there is an external resemblance." Thus portrayals of industrial and agricultural life that produce moralizing laughter for the Soviets have only an "external resemblance" to comedy in non-revolutionary societies.

14. Andrei Sinyavsky, *On Socialist Realism* (New York, 1960), p. 24.

15. Ibid., p. 76.

16. B. Alpers, Foreword to *Plays of Belotserkovski* in Yershov, *Comedy in the Soviet Theatre,* p. 130.

17. Lukàcs, *Studies in European Realism,* p. 5.

18. Sinyavsky, *On Socialist Realism,* p. 38.

19. Andrei Sinyavsky in the transcript of his trial as it appeared originally in the Polish magazine *Kultura* and in a shorter form in *The New York Times Magazine,* April 17, 1966.

20. Ibid.

21. Norman Mailer, *Harper's,* March, 1968, p. 120.

22. Sinyavsky, *On Socialist Realism,* p. 31.

23. Ibid., p. 37.

24. Benedetto Croce, *My Philosophy,* trans. E. F. Carritt (London, 1949), p. 83.